

seniors, raising the Medicare premium by 17.4 percent is a breach of that commitment, the largest increase in Medicare's 38 year history.

At the Republican convention on Thursday night, the President said, "I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor America's seniors." The next day, late in the afternoon, right before Labor Day, Friday afternoon, the Labor Day weekend, in spite of his comments the night before, the President quietly announced this 17.4 percent increase in premiums for senior citizens to have to pay into Medicare. Right before the Labor Day weekend. Is that what it means to honor seniors?

After President Bush signed the Medicare drug law a year ago, he launched a very expensive taxpayer-financed ad campaign featuring the slogan: "Same Medicare, better benefits." Those ads failed to mention the 17 percent premium increase even though the administration planned it as far back as March 2003. They failed to mention the 10 percent increase in the deductible for doctors' services which was written into the new law. It failed to mention the fact that both the premium and the deductible will continue to increase year after year after year without any corresponding increase in coverage.

Those ads, those taxpayer-financed ads, trying to sell the American people on the new Medicare bill failed to mention that while seniors will be paying more for the same Medicare, HMOs will be, "earning" might not be the right word, but earning more for the same Medicare. \$16 billion more, in fact.

This bill, this Medicare bill, clearly written for the drug industry and for the insurance industry, clearly has put seniors in the back seat. The drug industry, the insurance industries have contributed literally tens of millions of dollars to President Bush's campaign. The insurance industry gets a taxpayer subsidy of \$16 billion. And then seniors see their premiums go up and see their deductibles go up. They have got to find the money somewhere.

Under the Bush plan, in order to pay the insurance companies those subsidies, they need to raise the premiums for seniors more than \$100; they need to raise those premiums, a 17 percent increase. They need to raise those premiums for seniors to make up that money.

These benefits are being lavished on HMOs as a bonus and incentive for HMOs to accelerate their enrollment of Medicare enrollees. Now HMO profits last year without this increased by 50 percent, yet seniors are paying higher premiums so that HMO profits can soar even further. Senior and disabled Medicare enrollees on fixed incomes will pay more. HMOs will earn more and big drug companies will charge more.

The Bush administration in an amazing sleight of hand insisted on prohibiting Medicare from negotiating bulk discounts on behalf of 39 million Medicare beneficiaries on the prescription

drugs the same way that large insurance plans do, the same way that the VA does in our government.

As a result, the drug industry, because of this protection of the drug industry by the Bush administration, the drug industry stands to earn an additional \$160 billion in profits during the next 10 years. \$160 billion in profits in the next 10 years.

Again, more campaign contributions to President Bush from the insurance industry, more tens of millions of dollars in campaign contributions to the Republican leadership and to the President from the drug industry.

It is the same old story, the President says the right thing and then he does the wrong thing. It is the same old story, the President always responding to the best heeled, most organized, wealthiest corporate interests in this city.

Last week, the President again called himself a compassionate conservative, as if eroding senior's fixed incomes is compassionate, as if coercing them into fly-by-night HMOs, as the Medicare bill does, is compassionate, as if relegating seniors to a bargain-basement prescription drug plan is in any way compassionate.

After all, this President has proposed cutting \$60 billion from Medicaid; he had to because the tax cuts that went overwhelmingly to the wealthiest people in our society, he had to find the money someplace when it is the only source of nursing home care for 70 percent of people who need it. It is consistent, but it is not compassionate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order out of order.

HONORING THE MEN FROM WASHINGTON STATE WHO HAVE DIED IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, young men and women are giving up their lives nearly every day to sustain the President's war in Iraq. They are not in Iraq toppling Saddam. That has been done. They are not in Iraq dismantling weapons of mass destruction. There never were any. They are in Iraq dying in George Bush's crusade.

I think it is only fitting that we should give each of the dead a minute of silence here on the floor. But we

cannot because we would have to stand here silent for 16½ hours. That is because today we lost the 1,000th American in Iraq. For what? For what?

The President says we took out Saddam Hussein because he was a bad guy. Well, that could apply to an awful lot of people all over the face of the Earth. They went in there with no plan for establishing the peace. And more people have died since the President made his fabled landing on the Abraham Lincoln saying "mission accomplished" than died before that. More people have died since they handed over control to the Iraqis than died before the mission was accomplished. This has been an unending disaster.

So since we cannot give a minute of silence for every member, let me tell you who has died from my State thus far in Iraq. And I hope every Member will come to the floor and do what I am doing tonight, speak the names of the dead. Think about the futures they have lost and the families they leave behind. And then I hope every American will ask the President why. Why?

From Washington State we have lost Lance Corporal Cedric E. Burns, age 22; Specialist Justin W. Hebert, age 20; Private Duane E. Longstreth, age 19; Private Kerry D. Scott, age 21; Second Lieutenant Benjamin L. Colgan, age 30, distinguished soldier who made his picture on to the front page of Time magazine, very courageous and very good soldier; Specialist Robert T. Benson, age 20; Specialist John R. Sullivan, age 26; Captain James A. Shull, age 32; Specialist Nathan W. Nakis, 19; Sergeant Curt E. Jordan, Jr., age 25; Staff Sergeant Christopher Bunda, age 29; First Lieutenant Michael R. Adams, age 24; Sergeant Jacob R. Herring, age 21; Sergeant Jeffery R. Shaver, age 26; Private Cody S. Calavan, age 19; Lance Corporal Dustin L. Sides, age 22; Staff Sergeant Marvin Best, age 33; Specialist Jeremiah W. Schmunk, age 21; Sergeant Yadir G. Reynoso, age 27; Lance Corporal Kane M. Funke, age 20; Lance Corporal Caleb J. Powers, age 21; Sergeant Jason Cook, age 25.

These men have died in this crusade in a war that was never understood by the people who started it. They had no reason to go to Iraq and they went anyway, and these people from my State paid the price.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)